WHITE DWARF

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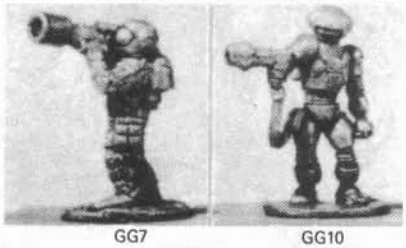

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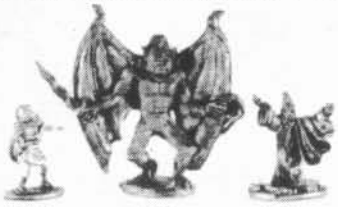

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WHITE DWARF

Featured on the centre spread of this issue is the layout for a *Bar-Room Brawl* scenario using D&D rules. Last issue we published the rules for *Light Sword*, a man-to-man SF game. Before that in *White Dwarf 9* we published a complete mini dungeon, *The Lichway*. It is our intention to publish a complete or semi-complete game in each issue of *White Dwarf* and in the meantime we would like to know readers' preferences to the type of game published.

Following Lew Pulsipher's letter this issue regarding character class preference, we have decided to conduct our own survey. Whereas Lew's initial survey confined itself to the four basic character classes, we intend to expand the *White Dwarf* survey to include all classes and sub-classes (see page 11).

Also we would be very interested to learn of readers' opinions of our *White Dwarf* covers. Please give your choice of the top ten covers out of the eleven so far published. We would be interested to know of your idea of good artwork.

Please feel free to send your replies to all the above surveys in one letter.

Ian Livingstone

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FIRE-ARMS: 3000 A.D.

Weapons additions for Traveller

by Brian Asbury

While weapons are quite comprehensively dealt with in the *Traveller* rules, in some ways this is one of the most disappointing sections of the rulebooks. Most of the weapons listed are readily available today, and thus there is little "Science Fiction" feel to combat. Thus, in an attempt to do something about this, I've devised some additional weaponry details, some being based on descriptions in SF novels, and others of my own creation.

1. The Hand Blaster: This is a handgun-sized atomic energy weapon, firing a tiny 3mm x 15mm projectile at 700 to 800 metres per second. Once it is set in motion, anything that stops the projectile trips a tiny atomic trigger which converts a sub-microscopic fraction of its mass into energy. A magazine carrying six charges is inserted into the gun's handle, one charge being fired for each pull of the trigger. Reloading takes one combat round, but two if the firer is treated as evading.

Disadvantages of this weapon are its obvious expense, plus the fact that any target blasted by it becomes radioactive for twenty four hours. The effective radius of this radiation is only about half a metre, however. If desired, the blaster can be used to cut through solid steel of up to 15cm thickness, blasting a circular opening of approximately 1 metre diameter.

2. The Blast Rifle: The rifle version of the above, firing a slightly larger 4mm calibre projectile at 1000 metres per second. A magazine containing 10 charges is fitted into the stock of the rifle; one round may be fired per pull of the trigger. Replacement of the magazine takes one combat round. The blast rifle has a slightly wider blast radius than its hand counterpart, being 1.5 metres rather than one metre. Neither weapon is suitable for use at close quarters.

3. Concussion Rifle: This is basically a sonic weapon, firing a directed blast of sound which has the effect of a heavy hammer-blow upon any target hit. No projectile is fired. The power pack supplying the energy for this weapon is capable of producing 20 shots before it needs recharging; it is fitted into the underside of the weapon forward of the trigger guard, and takes two hours to recharge. Replacement of the power pack with a fresh one takes two combat rounds. Damage done by this weapon varies with range, being 4D at close, 3D at short, 2D at medium and 1D at long. At close and short ranges, the concussion rifle *always* stuns, and at all ranges will knock the target off his feet unless a saving throw of 7+ is made. [DMs: -3 at close, -1 at medium (assuming for some reason the stunned individual doesn't automatically fall), +1 at long, +1 for dexterity 7+, +2 for dexterity 11+].

4. The L.P.L. Stungun (Full title Low Power Laser directed electrical shock Stun weapon): A pistol-sized weapon which uses a low power laser beam to ionise the air in a path along its line, and then sends a burst of electrical energy along the path. This has the effect of stunning any human-sized opponent it hits, without causing any actual damage. The saving throw against such a stun is 11+ for a human (DM: +1 for endurance 10+), but becomes proportionately lower for larger species, e.g. an elephant's save would be 3+. The power pack for this weapon forms the pistol's handle, carries 8 charges and takes four hours to recharge. Power packs may be changed during combat, taking one combat round to do so, in which the firer is treated as evading. This weapon does not function in vacuum or trace atmosphere and is subject to a DM of -4 in high crosswinds.

5. Incendiary Rifle: About the size of a carbine but with a much wider 12mm calibre. The incendiary rifle fires hollow 40mm length bullet-shaped projectiles, each of which is divided into two compartments. The forward compartment of an incendiary projectile contains a small pellet of white phosphorus plus a tiny detonator, the rear compartment contains napalm. On impact the projectile does 3D-3 damage, but then bursts into flame doing an additional 2D damage per turn for four turns or until extinguished. The magazine for this weapon contains 15 rounds and is clipped in front of the trigger guard. One round is fired for each pull of the trigger. Changing the magazine takes 1 combat round. The projectile is ejected at 500-600 metres per second.

This weapon is unsuitable for use aboard ship due to the obvious fire risks and is also ineffective in vacuum or trace atmospheres.

6. The Anagun: This useful weapon appears as a small pistol with a very slim barrel. It fires not bullets but tiny 15mm x 1mm needles at a velocity of 400–500 metres per second. The needles have a ridge which prevents skin penetration deeper than 2–3mm, and are designed to inject the target with a small quantity of a powerful anaesthetic. The drugs take effect in one combat round anaesthetising the victim for one hour. They are very potent, the saving throw being 13+ with a DM of +1 for endurance 9+ and +1 for endurance of 12+ (accumulative). Creatures larger than human-sized have proportionately lower saves, a hippo for example requiring only 4+. Creatures much bigger than this will not be affected.

Standard ana-needles will be ineffective against mesh, cloth, ablat or battledress. However, special extra-penetrative needles are available for use in these situations; the Type P needle is designed to penetrate the first named three, and a power-injection needle, the Type PX, designed to drill through battle armour. This latter requires a special power-injection adaptor to be fitted to the anagun around and in front of the barrel.

A clip of twenty standard (Type S) or Type P needles, or ten Type PX needles can be fitted into the pistol handle and are fired one at a time. The clip takes one combat round to replace with a fresh one and the power-injection adaptor also takes one combat round to fit or remove.

7. The Plasma Blade: Effectively this is an energy sword. Activating a contact on the hilt causes a blade-shaped magnetic

field to spring from it. Within one combat round the field fills with the high-energy plasma – the "fourth state of matter" at stellar temperatures. The blade length is approximately 800mm and this is a formidable weapon indeed being able to slice off a limb in less than a second with very little effort or cut through 10cm-thick steel plate. However, it does have disadvantages. Its high working temperature requires its wielder to wear protective clothing such as a Vacc Suit or battledress. A special arm covering for use with Plasma Blades is available at a cost of CR 1000.

The Plasma Blade is powered by a back-worn power pack, which provides enough energy to activate the Plasma Blade for one hour's continuous use. The hilt of the Blade is connected to the power pack by a flexible cable which is usually fixed along the sleeve of the Vacc Suit/battledress. The purpose-built arm protector has its own built-in cable. The power pack when exhausted requires eight hours to recharge it via a suitable high-energy source.

8. Pellet Clip Bracelet: This is not in itself a weapon but is a special wrist bracelet divided into six compartments each of which can hold four special mini-grenade pellets. The compartments can be rotated about the bracelet to facilitate use and pressure on the face of a compartment causes a pellet to be ejected and flipped into the wearer's hand. So fast and efficient is the action that a pellet can be flipped into the hand, activated and tossed in a single combat turn. The bracelet is small and compact enough to be concealed up a character's sleeve. Pellet Clip Bracelets are constructed from high-impact plastic and will thus avoid detection by most metal detectors.

9. Pellet Grenades: Tiny 5mm diameter spherical grenades which may be fitted with delay fuses or with contact detonators. The standard *Explosive Pellet Grenade* has a blast radius of three metres doing 3D damage to all caught in the blast. It is usually hand-hurled although grenades with timer fuses can be planted in a specific location to detonate after a pre-set period of time. Each grenade contains a tiny stud-pin which is either pulled out or set for timing depending upon the type to activate the grenade. Other Pellet Grenade types include:

Knockout Gas Grenades release a powerful quick-acting nerve gas of temporary effect which renders all who breathe it unconscious within one combat turn. Each grenade releases a cloud of 1000 cubic metres volume.

Blackout Grenades release a colourless and odourless gas which brings about a complete but temporary paralysis of the optic nerve. Within one combat turn anyone breathing the gas is rendered totally blind for a period of two hours. The cloud released is of the same volume as above.

Both of the above types of gas pellet are activated in the same way as the Explosive Pellet and both can be easily deployed from a Pellet Clip Bracelet.

10. The Power Holster: This unique automated holster is worn strapped to the forearm. The gun is connected to it by a flexible cable. When the wearer wishes to draw his weapon, he merely shapes the fingers of his gun hand as though grasping an imaginary gun butt. Sensitive actuators built into the holster react to the pattern formed by the tendons of the wrist, and cause the cable connected to the gun to become a stiff curved rod. This flips the gun from the holster and into the hand in a motion almost too fast for the eye to follow. Thus in situations where weapons need to be drawn or raised, the wearer of a power holster will *always,* without exception, draw first.

Power Holsters can be made to fit automatic pistols or Hand Blasters but are expensive as each Power Holster must be individually constructed and specially tailored to fit its user. One man's Power Holster cannot be worn by another. The gun to be used must also be partially rebuilt to be incorporated into the power holster, the cable must be fitted and also the trigger guard must be removed.

To use a Power Holster a character must be at least +1 expertise in the weapon involved and must also practice for three months to achieve +½ expertise with the holster itself. Characters may elect to take out expertise with a Power Holster if he rolls a "Gun Combat" skill. Each level of expertise with the Holster is equivalent to adding a level of expertise with the weapon it contains. A Power Holster will function for 3 months before it requires recharging from a suitable energy source.

TABLE 1: WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT WEIGHTS AND PRICES

Item	*Weight*	*Ammo Wt*	*Rds/ Clip*	*Length*	*Base Price*	*Ammo Price*
Hand Blaster	1,200	200	6	200	4,000	200
LPL Stungun	500	–	–	175	1,500	–
Anagun	250	–	–	150	500	–
Blast Rifle	6,500	400	10	1,000	6,000	350
Concussion Rifle	5,000	–	–	850	3,500	–
Incendiary Rifle	5,000	500	15	1,000	1,500	250
Plasma Blade	500	–	–	950	10,000	–
LPL Power Pack	300	–	8	–	200	16*
PB Power Pack	4,000	–	–	–	1,500	300*
CR Power Pack	750	–	20	–	500	20*
Anagun ammo S	50	–	20	–	30	–
Anagun ammo P	75	–	20	–	55	–
Anagun ammo PX	90	–	10	–	100	–
Explosive PG (10)	50	–	10	–	200	–
KO Gas PG (10)	70	–	10	–	250	–
BO Gas PG (10)	70	–	10	–	275	–
Pellet Clip B'let	100	–	–	50	150	–
Power Holster	300	–	–	220	5,000	50*
Power Injection Adtr	100	–	–	100	300	–

* Indicates cost to recharge at a suitable energy source.

TABLE 2: WEAPONS MATRIX

Attacker's Weapon	*Defender's Armour*						
	Nothing	**Jack**	**Mesh**	**Cloth**	**Reflec**	**Ablat**	**Battle**
Hand Blaster	+4	+4	+1	-1	+4	+1	-4
LPL Stungun	+2	+2	+1	+1	-8	-7	-6
Anagun	+1	+1	-2*	-3*	+1	-2*	-5*
Blast Rifle	+6	+6	+3	-1	+6	+4	-2
Concussion Rifle	+1	+1	0	-1	+1	-1	-5
Incendiary Rifle	+5	+5	+4	+2	+1	-6**	-6
Plasma Blade	+7	+7	+4	+3	+7	+3**	-1

* Hits against these armour types by Anagun fire is possible only if the appropriate required needle types are used, i.e. Type P or PX.
** Each time it is hit by Incendiary fire or Plasma Blade, the ablat's DM is decreased by 1.

TABLE 3: RANGE MATRIX

Attacker's Weapon	*Range*					*Wound Inflicted*
	Close	**Short**	**Medium**	**Long**	**Very Long**	
Hand Blaster	-6	0	+1	-5	no	5D
LPL Stungun	+2	+2	-1	no	no	*
Anagun	+1	+2	-4	-7	no	*
Blast Rifle	-8	+1	+3	+1	-1	6D
Concussion Rifle	+2	+4	+1	-5	no	2D
Incendiary Rifle	-4	+1	-2	-4	-5	3D-3; *
Plasma Blade	-2	+2	no	no	no	4D+4

* = Special (see written description)

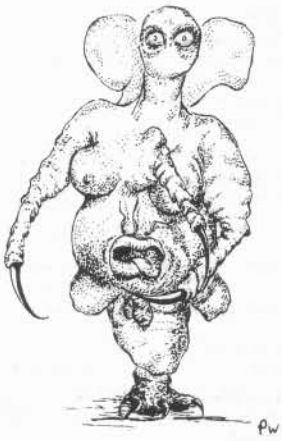
That just about winds it up. My apologies to Harry Harrison, in particular, for ideas stolen for the purpose of this article! May your jumps through Hyperspace never throw you off course, and may the Galactic Spirit always guide you safely on your journeyings.

A regular feature introducing new and interesting monsters, edited by **Don Turnbull**.

We really should take pity on the poor characters who must constantly do battle with the creatures coming out of the *Factory*. But variety is the spice of life as they say so let's open the *Factory* doors this time on another impressive selection of monsters which I hope you will enjoy.

LAUREN

By Colin Reynolds



No. appearing:	**1**
Armour class:	**9**
Movement:	**3"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8**
Treasure:	**nil**
Attack:	**two spikes 1D4 each plus strangulation 1D4**
Alignment:	**neutral**
Intelligence:	**average**
Monstermark:	**17.1 (level II in 12 levels)**

This hermaphrodite humanoid is seven feet tall, naked and hairless. It has three heads of which the outer two are featureless; the middle one has three large, deeply-inset eyes, two to the front and one to the rear. It has three arms; the two at its shoulders are jointed so that they can attack equally well behind as in front – these arms are prehensile limbs at the end of which is a six-inch-long vicious-looking spike. The third arm, emerging from the chest, seems normal except that the hand has three fingers. Of its three legs, the outer two are stumps, the central one has three toes.

If both spikes hit a victim in front, the central arm will grasp the victim's neck and strangle him, doing an additional 1D4 damage.

The Lauren's mouth is located in its belly; this is for the sole purpose of eating, mainly decayed flesh. Above the mouth are three three-inch tentacles which writhe continuously.

Normally, the Lauren will shy away from other creatures, but if cornered it will project two illusions of itself which it controls telepathically. These illusions will fight as the original and will take no damage themselves, though they will do damage if they are 'believed'.

Lauren is an anagram of 'unreal'.

Comments: certainly a most unusual creature, and it's nice to have a full physical description, not only for our readers but also for our artist. The inventor used D6 for its hit dice and I hope he doesn't mind my amending this – perhaps it was just a mis-type. I would rule that the arms attack at -2 to the rear because the single eye would give no depth of vision; also that, if both 'outside' arms hit a victim to the front, the third arm would automatically hit and not require a roll. The illusion generation is little different from the Mirror Image spell, though in the Lauren's case the illusions can do damage which the mirror images can't. Again, mirror images disappear if hit, the way I play it, while these illusions remain until the Lauren itself is killed.

SPOOK

By Roger Musson

No. appearing:	**1D6**
Armour Class:	**4**
Movement:	**12"**
Hit Dice:	**6D8+1**
Treasure:	**type E**
Attack:	**1 touch (special)**
Alignment:	**chaotic-evil**
Intelligence:	**high**
Monstermark:	**383 (level IX in 12 levels)**

The Spook is an archetypal winding-sheet ghost figure, true Undead and turnable as a Spectre. It is invulnerable to normal weapons including fire but takes half damage from silver. The touch of the Spook causes the victim instantly to become a Spook under the original Spook's control. If the controlling Spook is killed within an hour of the transformation, the victim returns to normal, together with any of *his* victims, none the worse for wear. Otherwise the effect is permanent.

Comments: My suggestion that the Undead are given insufficient prominence in the Factory has resulted in a whole host of new Undead, of which this is one of the best and one of the most powerful. In effect, we have here a Spectre which is capable of draining *all* the victim's experience levels at a stroke – something which even a Vampire can't do. This makes me wonder whether level IX (which includes the Vampire) is the right place for the Spook – perhaps level X or XI would be a better reflection of its nastiness.

WITHERSTENCH

By Jonathan Jones

No. appearing:	**3D4**
Armour class:	**7**
Movement:	**6"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8+2**
Treasure:	**type B**
Attack:	**two claws 1D6 each plus special**
Alignment:	**neutral**
Intelligence:	**semi**
Monstermark:	**22.2 (allowing M=2A – level III in 12 levels)**

This beast is 4' long and resembles a skunk with severe acne. It is found mainly in dank filthy areas where carrion is plentiful.

Its spots emit a powerful odour and a character encountering it must save against poison or be nauseated and rendered helpless to the Witherstench's attacks.

Comments: it isn't entirely clear what is the radius of the spots' effects – can the beast be picked off with arrows from a distance, for instance? I guess so – the radius of effect can hardly be more than about 10' Otherwise a useful wanderer (since no-one will presumably want to enter its lair without an oxygen mask).

TRIBE of the STONE

By Jack McArdle

No. appearing:	variable
Armour class:	9
Movement:	6" or 12" (see below)
Hit Dice:	3D8 or 4D8 (see below)
Treasure:	nil
Attack:	see below
Alignment:	Lawful/evil
Intelligence:	average
Monstermark:	variable; suggest level II for warrior, level III for chaser and level IV for leader

These humanoids are slightly under human height (say around 5') and have prehensile tails. Their main purpose is to seek subjects to turn into more of their kind, and they do this by carrying off a victim and subjecting him to the necessary alterations in their hidden lairs.

Warriors have 6" movement and hit dice 4D8; they use one +4 magic dagger which does 1D4+4 damage, and 50% of warriors have two of these daggers, both of which can be used in melee.

Chasers have 12" movement and 24 hit points, attacking with two feet (1D6 each) and one tail (1D4) each round with hit probability as though they were 3D8.

Leaders have 12" movement and 32 hit points, always fighting with two +4 magic daggers (as warriors) and attacking as 4D8 beasts.

When first encountered, there will only be one member of the tribe: roll D10 and 1-7 means a Chaser has been encountered, 8-0 means a Warrior. The next round one more member of the tribe will appear: 1-5 Leader, 6-8 Chaser, 9-0 Warrior. Each round thereafter one further member of the tribe will appear: 1-5 Leader, 6-7 Chaser, 8-9 Warrior, while 0 means no more appear that round or thereafter.

Each tribe will only have one Leader and one Chaser; if a second Leader or Chaser is indicated by the 'appearance' roll, count the appearance as a Warrior. If by chance a 'no more' is rolled on the appearance table before a Leader has appeared, the tribe's morale breaks at that time and those which have appeared will flee. Similarly, the tribe's morale will break if their leader is killed in melee. In melee, the Leader tends to stay in the background and let the Warriors do the fighting for him. If the tribe slay a member of the opposition, they will grab the corpse (this is the Chaser's task) and attempt to flee with it. They will drop the body if they panic before they are safely out of the melee.

The Leader can be recognised by the fact that he has a large glowing ruby on a chain round his neck. This jewel gives him special powers:—

a) he can regenerate half his remaining hit points each round, though his hit points can never exceed 32: thus if he took 20 damage in the first round, reducing his hit to 12, he could regenerate 6 points and increase his hits to 18, but if he took 6 points of damage in the first round, reducing his hits to 26, he could regenerate only 6 points to take his hits up to 32 again, not 13 points which would take his hits over 32;
b) he can 'steal' hit points, once per round, from any member of the tribe: to do this, the hit points of the 'victim' are reduced by a chosen number, but not so as to kill the victim, and that number of hit points are transferred to the Leader — again his hits cannot rise to more than 32 points; and
c) he can transfer hit points between members of the tribe, once per round, again without killing any 'victim' or raising any Warrior's hit points above its original level (24 points for the Chaser).

The jewel can be captured if the leader is killed, though in this case it is the task of the Chaser to try to recover the jewel and make away with it. If the jewel does fall into the party's hands, it enables the holder to regenerate hit points (on the basis as outlined above). Each time the jewel is used, however, there is a 5% chance (no saving roll) that the user will change into a Stone Leader.

Comments: the first time we have had a tribal entry in the Factory, and welcome it is too. It lends itself to much greater development, of course — some tribes could have developed magical/clerical powers, for instance. I can accept the regenerative properties of the jewel if captured, though to be able to regenerate up to half one's remaining hit points makes it a most valuable possession, and perhaps too valuable.

I have reservations, too, about the +4 magic daggers (a very powerful weapon), for such a tribe to possess in what are potentially large quantities.

However let my reservations not detract from this contribution, which could usefully be developed into an excellent 'tribal' monster on the lines of the Drow in the new TSR modules.

Matters which should probably be considered in developing the tribe further include character class limitations, class level limitations, ability scores maxima and minima (including scores for females of the race), racial characteristics adjustments, multi-class abilities, languages and weapon use, any innate magical powers — and so on.

BERBALANG

By Albie Fiore

No. appearing:	1–24
Armour class:	6
Movement:	6"/24"
Hit Dice:	1D8
Treasure:	D
Attack:	1-4/1-4/1-6
Alignment:	Chaotic/evil
Intelligence:	Very
Monstermark:	18 (level II in 12 levels)

The Berbalang is a tribal humanoid with leathery skin and bat-like wings. Its eyes are white and watery and its powers of infravision are twice as effective as elves' (120' range). In a Berbalang lair — an underground cavern far from well-trodden paths — there may be as many as 50 of the beasts, male and female.

Once a day each Berbalang has the power to create a self-induced trance in which state it may send forth a physical projection of itself, in order to acquire food — a freshly killed human corpse. This projection will leave the lair, but the Berbalang itself will never do so except under extreme duress. The lair is therefore always fully populated, with no more than 50% of the Berbalangs in a trance state at any one time.

The Berbalang's 'projection' is physical in the sense that it can attack and deliver damage — in this respect it is a duplicate of its 'host'. In its trance state, the host Berbalang can use all the senses of its projection and will command the projection in its quest for food to a maximum range of 500' from the lair. If the projection is hit and suffers damage it immediately takes flight and rejoins the host body, the host remaining in its trance for a further three turns due to the mental shock. If the damage incurred by the projection is sufficient to reduce its hits to zero or below, there is a 75% chance that the host body will also die as a result of *system shock.*

If the projection kills a human it will pick up the body and fly immediately back to the host which will emerge without delay from its trance if the projection was not hit.

In a typical Berbalang lair there will be a protected area to the rear of the cavern where Berbalangs retire to go into trance, for in this state they are inert and incapable of any physical activity.

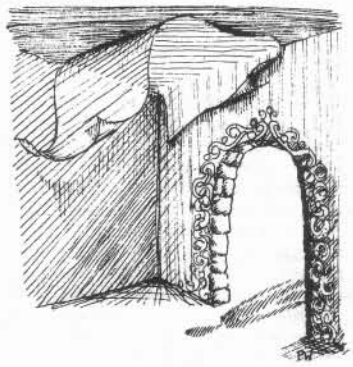
The unique ability of the Berbalang may be the product of psionic powers in which case the beast may also have others; the facts are as yet not proven either way.

Comments: an unusual beast, and the first time we have had anything in the *Factory* which, at least potentially, has psionic powers. My limited experience leads me to believe that psionics are not all that popular at present — perhaps the arrival of the *Referee's Guide* will clear up the uncertainties which apparently exist?

This is a most unusual beast, psionic or not, and one which will not be easy for DMs to 'run' — but worthy of inclusion underground for all that.

SHEET PHANTOM

By David Wormell



No. appearing:	1
Armour class:	3
Movement:	6"
Hit Dice:	3D8
Treasure:	nil
Attack:	1D4 plus special
Alignment:	chaotic/evil
Intelligence:	average
Monstermark:	36.0 (level III in 12 levels)

This creature appears as a near-transparent rectangle 8' x 5' x ¼" thick. It moves along the ceiling waiting to drop on a victim, and if it hits it forms a plastic-bag effect over him, causing 1D4 damage per round due to suffocation. When a victim is enveloped by a Sheet Phantom he cannot move.

If the victim dies, the Sheet Phantom merges with his shape and the whole becomes a Sheet Ghoul with AC2, hit dice 3D8+4 and all other characteristics as before.

The Sheet Ghoul attacks as a normal Ghoul but without paralysis and using a squirt of acid for 1D6+1 damage.

Comments: the designer doesn't say how, if at all, this thing can be turned away (since it is without doubt Undead). I would guess it would turn as a regular Ghoul. What I think we have here is a physical manifestation of an Undead spirit which requires a body to function properly. ►

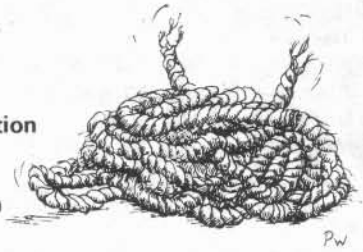
THE FIEND FACTORY

Continued from page 9

Lapidan

By Roger Musson

No. appearing:	**3D6**
Armour class:	**6**
Movement:	**5"**
Hit Dice:	**1D8+1**
Treasure:	**1D100 GP**
Attack:	**2 times 1D4 plus petrification**
Alignment:	**chaotic**
Intelligence:	**animal**
Monstermark:	**3.8 (level I in 12 levels)**



The Lapidan is easily mistaken for a harmless pile of rope — indeed, it could be described as 'animated rope', its body being one piece of rope-like material with two 'arms' growing out of it. These arms are branched like flails and are the creature's method of attack. Each 'arm' strikes for 1D4 damage, and if one or both of them hit, the victim must make his saving throw or be turned to stone.

The Lapidan is invulnerable to all non-edged weapons, but very susceptible to hits by edged weapons — a hit with an edged weapon which scores +2 or more than the number required on the 'to hit' roll is an automatic critical hit.

The property of petrifaction does not persist after the creature's death (though those previously petrified do not return to normal when it dies); however, if the spells Charm Monster, Suggestion and Sleep are cast in quick succession on the living Lapidan, it goes into suspended animation and can be tied to a rod for use as a very handy flail of petrifaction.

Unless it has been Charmed, it is non susceptible to Sleep or similar spells, but physical spells such as Fireball affect it as normal.

Comments: only one comment to make on an excellent and quite straightforward beast — I'm not sure what critical hit system Roger uses, but guess that the '+2 or better' edged weapon hit results in a severing, if not of the body itself, at least of one arm from the body.

Devil Dog

By Louis Boschelli

No. appearing:	**4—16**
Armour class:	**6**
Movement:	**30"**
Hit dice:	**6D8**
Treasure:	**Nil**
Attack:	**2D8 plus special**
Alignment:	**Chaotic/Evil**
Intelligence:	**Average**
Monstermark:	**78.6 (level V in 12 levels)**

Stark-white hounds with light blue eyes, devil dogs live in cold regions and when encountered in snow- or frost-covered areas are invisible beyond a range of 30'. The dogs roam in packs in an endless search for food and will always attack human parties, being sly enough to use their protective coloration to best advantage. Occasionally (10%) a pack of devil dogs will be accompanied by 1—4 zombies.

The devil dog always goes for the throat with a vicious bite. Normal damage inflicted is 2—16 points, but if the "to hit" die roll is 2 or more greater than that which is required, or a natural 20 in any event, a critical hit is scored on the throat — the victim suffers double damage, is comatose for 2—8 turns, must survive a *system shock* to avoid immediate death and must receive *cure light wound* (or a stronger ministration of the same nature) during the comatose period to avoid dying at the end of that period. When attacking or giving chase, devil dogs emit an intense baying which will automatically cause *Fear* in any character of the third experience level or lower.

Comments: a useful monster, more suited to the wilderness than underground. The range at which their baying can be heard should be set, and I would suggest ¾ of a mile in still, flat terrain.

There are now nearly 300 monsters in the *Factory*, including the few which have been published so far. This is a most impressive response in the time the *Factory* has been open (and I guess the editor has even more contributions stacked away for me). Nevertheless I hope I may repeat the message to those who haven't had their creations published so far — don't despair, keep trying!

. . . there are to be some changes to the **D&D Boxed Set.** Included will be a basic Module entitled **In Search of the Unknown**, taking the place of the former geomorphs and monster/treasure list. It will also be available separately. The cover folder (which will be a light green) will be a single fold cover much like the G1 cover, showing two maps on the inside (the dungeon is two levels). The interior booklet is 32 pages long, with the final page being perforated for removal — this is the "Players' Background Sheet" which gives background info on the game situation, a list of potential characters (which can be used by the players in preference to their own rolled characters, or as hireling/henchmen), and tips on play for beginning D&Der's . . .

. . . *Games Workshop* and *Bryan Ansell* have got together to form *Citadel Miniatures*, a new miniatures company that will be manufacturing several ranges of figures. **Ral Partha** are already in production, but *Citadel* will also be producing own ranges, including the *Fiend Factory* figures, *Fantasy Adventurers* and *Fantasy Specials. Citadel* will not be limiting production to SF/F figures, but also new ranges of historical wargaming figures . . .

. . . *The Chaosium* reports continuing expansion for **Runequest. Creatures of Chaos 1** is the new Source Pack and **Apple Lane** is a Scenario Pack giving a slimpse of the Dragon Pass campaign. For board gamers the next production will concern Mycenean times where one turn equals a generation, and each player is a scion of a royal house attempting to become an Agamemnon or other high king . . .

. . . good news for **Traveller** fans is that it is now being manufactured under licence from *GDW* by *Games Workshop* with a significant price drop on the USA import. Also being printed in the UK are **Mercenary** (book 4) and **1001 Characters** (Supplement 1). Meanwhile *GDW* are working on **Kinunit,** a **Traveller** adventure set aboard a star cruiser . . .

. . . *Fantasy Games Unlimited* have just released **Destrier,** a card system for individual combat in **Chivalry & Sorcery** . . .

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LETTERS

Readers' thoughts, suggestions, ideas, views, comments and criticisms. Letters should be sent to the Editor, WHITE DWARF, Games Workshop, 1 Dalling Road, Hammersmith, London W6.

Dear WD,

I am sure everybody remembers Don Turnbull's Monstermark System published in *White Dwarf 1–3.* Since then, there has been no serious challenge to it in your magazine, and this placid acceptance worries me.

Before we go any further, don't get me wrong; the system is outstanding in its ability to calculate a melee value for most monsters, and as long as a monster has no special abilities other than those increasing its punch in close combat, the system is virtually flawless. Even so, it falls very short when taking into account other types of special abilities.

For example, compare the Owl Bear and Ogre Mage, with A values of 113.1 and 53.1 respectively. The M values are given as 169.7 for the Owl Bear and 106.2 for the Ogre Mage, and assuming this was not a typo, there is something very wrong. The hug of the Owl Bear is given a multiplier of 1½, while the combined magical abilities of the Ogre Mage is given a multiplier of 2. No rationale is given either for these seemingly arbitrary values or for the dismissal of the ability of the latter monster's cold blast to drop most characters of levels 1–3 in their tracks (even if the saving throw is made) before they are able to close to melee range!

Another glaring inaccuracy is inherent in a statement about the Ochre Jelly (*White Dwarf 1,* p.11): "Its only special property is that weapon hits cause it to multiply – and who, moderately familiar with dungeon lore, is daft enough to go hitting Ochre Jellies with swords?"

What Mr. Turnbull is saying is that invulnerability to melee hits is worthless in his system, a notion that runs counter to the whole foundation of the system. I've seen parties in more than one game demolished because they encountered an OJ and were unable to flee. Only the slow (3") speed of the OJ diminishes its destructive potential in a normal encounter.

Why, one might also ask, does the Shadow (which cannot be struck with non-magical weapons, and is immune to the two best first level attack spells) receive the piddly rating of 8.2? Does everyone in Mr. Turnbull's game start out with a magical weapon?

Just as "an experience system based only on hit dice should be questioned" (*White Dwarf 1,* p.10), so also should a rating system based on melee modified by a random number multiplier. The omission of a logical integration of the value of special abilities is not necessarily fatal, but it definitely mars what would be an otherwise excellent system. The *Monstermark System* is excellent for what it covers, but as it is, it is far from complete.

Yours sincerely,
James Ronco, Valparaiso, USA.

– Perhaps, James, you would like to complete Don's system for the benefit of our readers . . . ? Ed.

Dear WD,

I felt I should write regarding Mr. Sapienza's letter in *White Dwarf 8* about damage inflicted by crossbows vs. longbows. He states in the letter that he based his original hits for a crossbow on his opinion and not hard facts, he goes on to say that he adjusted these hits by reading an article in *Strategy & Tactics,* I have been a regular subscriber to S&T for a number of years now and I have found them to be a long way from 100% accurate in everything they write. The S&T team tackle every aspect of military history from biblical to space warfare in their articles and whilst they obviously put a lot of effort into the facts they put forward, they should not be used as the last word on anything. If a reader goes through their magazines he will find many contradictions particularily in the way of ballistics.

Anybody who wants a realistic representation of the power of the different types of bow should select a number of medieval books and draw his own conclusions. *Medieval Warfare* by Terence Wise is a very good book to start with.

Yours sincerely,
John Smart, Chigwell, Essex

Dear WD,

Concering the Coffer Corpse featured in the *Fiend Factory* in *White Dwarf 8.* Don Turnbull questions whether the players should be affected by fear. When I first created this monster it was with the intention of making it a challenging surprise to the players in my campaign. A lot of this challenge is based upon the assumption that the players don't know its specifications.

Thus, after the Cleric in the party has found this 'zombie' more difficult to deal with than expected, and the Corpse has casually strangled someone to death apparently paying no heed to the desperate attacks on its back by the rest of the party (normal weapons having no real effect), the players might be very relieved when they finally ground it with a critical hit. However, when it rises next round and the mercenaries flee I thought it would be better to let the players themselves decide whether to follow their hirelings or bravely fight on, this method being preferable to binding them with a die roll.

This is obviously dependant upon the players not having 'read up' the monster and if the situation is otherwise I would suggest, at the risk of sounding inconsistent, that player-characters, too, should roll for fear.

Incidentally, the Coffer Corpse was designed to suit my campaign requirements and DMs should feel free to modify it to suit their purposes. For instance, the number of hit dice could be altered, possibly dependant upon the level of the corpse before death. I would also recommend adding a twist or two to encounters, by lacing the stinking lair with disease for example; or am I insulting your imaginations . . . ?

Yours sincerely,
Simon Eaton, Bracknell, Berks.

Dear WD,

I recently conducted a survey of D&D and fantasy games players through *Trollcrusher* and *News from Bree.* I asked people to list the basic four character classes in order of preference. A few gave only first choice. The result is tabulated below.

	Favourite Character Class			
	First Choice	Second	Third	Fourth
Magic User	29	13	7	6
Fighter	17	20	16	4
Cleric	8	11	15	21
Thief	4	10	17	24

Yours sincerely,
Lew Pulsipher, London

We would be interested to conduct our own survey concerning all character classes and sub-classes. Please send us your first three choices from Fighters, Paladins, Rangers, Clerics, Druids, Magic-Users, Illusionists, Thieves, Assassins, Monks, Bards, Barbarians, Man-Beast, etc. We will print the result next issue.

A BAR~ROOM BRAWL ~D&D STYLE

by Lew Pulsipher

At *Games Day III* Nick Slope entertained me with an account of a bar-room brawl he had refereed using some western gunfight rules. It occurred to me that a similar "adventure" based on *Dungeons & Dragons* rules could be devised, and *Dragonmeet 1* in August 1978 gave me a chance to try it. I borrowed from Nick the idea of giving each ready-made character a special objective to add to the usual experience point goals, and the game proved rather popular! For those of you who would like to stage your own D&D bar-room brawl, here is a description of the game. (The board, tokens and character cards are provided in the centre spread which can be pulled out, mounted on card, and cut into individual components. The game can be visually enhanced by using miniature figures for all the characters instead of the tokens.)

Preparation

The referee should place the accessory markers on the board in the following positions (* indicates hex or part of hex on the balcony):

Tables: C3-4; C15-16; D7; D10; D13; G9; G12; G15; H19: J8.
Chairs: C2-3; C6; C7: C9; C10; C12; C13; C16-17; D6; D8; D9; D11; D12; D14; E7; E8; E10; E11; E13; E14; F8; F9; F11; F12; F14; F15; G8; G10; G11; G13; G14; G16; H9; H10; H12; H13; H15; H16; I19-20; J7.
Beds: A1-2; A15-16; E3-4; E17-18; G4-5; G18-19; I5-6; K20-21.
Water Buckets: A3*. A12; I7*; K10; K18.
Potted Plants: B11; C5; G6*; J17 (on bar); J18*.
Torches: B8; B13; E6; I17; K10.
Sand Buckets: B8; E15; F7; J18*; K18.
Small Cauldrons of Hot Stew: both on K6 (hanging over log fire).

Setting the Scene

First, the referee describes the scene to the players and gives each of them one of the 15 character cards (with all the information concerning personality, movement, AC, etc.) and the correspondingly numbered play token (see centre spread).

The board is a hex-grid plan of a tavern in a relatively shunned area, but could be in a city (beware the watch!) or elsewhere. The ground floor is stone-built; the upper floor is of timber, including the bedrooms which open off the balcony. The balcony itself runs around three sides, going above the doorway (the only place where tokens can move under the balcony). Its floor is 8 feet above ground level. The chandeliers, 10 feet high, are connected via rope and hooks to a fastening behind the bar from which they can be raised or lowered (or cut down . . .). The players place their figures standing at the bar or seated at a table. A seated character should be placed on a chair marker rather than beside it.

The non-player characters controlled by the referee are as follows:

1. **Minstrel** (a weak form of bard): 2nd level; 6 hits, AC6, neutral, female, bracers of defence AC6, starts – E12. Has a pet monkey (starts – D12) who collects money, and a dagger.
2. **Peasant:** 1 hit, AC9, alignment scared, starts – I14.
3. **Bar-keeper's daughter:** 1 hit, AC9. Serves at the bar, starts – K12.
4. **Bar-keeper's wife:** 1 hit, AC9. Works in the kitchen, starts – K7.
5. **Merchant:** Neutral, 3 hits, AC9. Has pouch with 150 g.p., necklace worth 100 g.p., ring worth 500 g.p., starts – C13.
6, 7. **Merchant's bodyguards:** 5 hits each, AC7, sword, start – C12 and D14.
8. **Ogre:** 19 hits, AC5, size L, club for 1–10, 3 hexes.

The giant rats summoned by the wererat have 1, 2, 3, and 4 hits, damage 1–3, AC7, 4 hexes. All the non-player characters except the ogre move 4 hexes per round.

The appearance of each figure is described to the group and then order writing begins.

How To Play

The referee should keep a separate list of the important factors such as speed, AC, hit bonus, and alignment, using the number identification. Players write their orders on separate sheets with the identification at the top. The referee writes the orders for all non-player characters. The orders are read in numerical order each turn, though all actions are considered to be simultaneous. A move of one square is indicated by writing the grid reference. Facing is indicated by a circled grid reference. Players can also write simple orders such as "follow the elf". There are two order sessions each melee round, one for movement and a second for combat. Only one figure is allowed in a hex in most circumstances.

Otherwise standard D&D rules and common sense are used. If an unusual event like a falling chandelier or thrown chair occurs, the result should be figured as seems logical in the circumstances. This applies to movement of non-player characters as well. The ogre listed last among the characters was designed to appear at the door if things slow down too much.

Previous Incidents

The *Dragonmeet* games lasted three hours and were quite tiring to referee. With fewer players, or with first level characters or more forceful magic, the game would last a shorter time. Anyone who wants to run a game can make up his own characters and objectives if any of the players have read this.

I ran the brawl twice, the first a playtest with only five players including myself (3 characters each). It would be too much to describe an entire brawl, but some incidents are worth describing. For example, to begin the first brawl the monk leaped over the bar and killed the bar-keeper's daughter. At the same time the female barbarian walked over to the elf MU and asked why he was ruining her dinner. She then drew her sword but hit only air, and the elf managed to charm her. He told her to give him the sword; when she complied he grabbed it and died, having received 6 hits owing to the difference in alignments!

Later the same lass, now recovered, levitated and cut down a chandelier right on top of the druid. But he managed to get out alive despite being in a melee at the time. No one tried to swing on a chandelier, unfortunately.

In the second brawl our female friend began by grabbing her chair while levitating. She climbed over the balcony rail, threw the chair at someone, threw a plant at someone else, and then shot her bow at anyone in sight for the rest of the game.

The evil cleric and man-hating female MU began in adjacent chairs in the first brawl. Naturally, considering his objective, he propositioned her; she set her dog on him. The cleric was luckier the second time. He propositioned the female assassin, who offered to "do it" for 100 g.p. They went into the kitchen and after a time she tried to stab him as he pushed her out the door and blocked it.

The gnoll was a prime target for the dwarf's hammer. But the dwarf died, and the gnoll's armour began to heat up (nasty druid); so he climbed over the bar and poured a bucket of water over himself before returning to the fray.

Oh, well, at least nobody ordered a glass of milk. Now *that's* the way to start a bar-room brawl!

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swinging gate

BAR

BAR

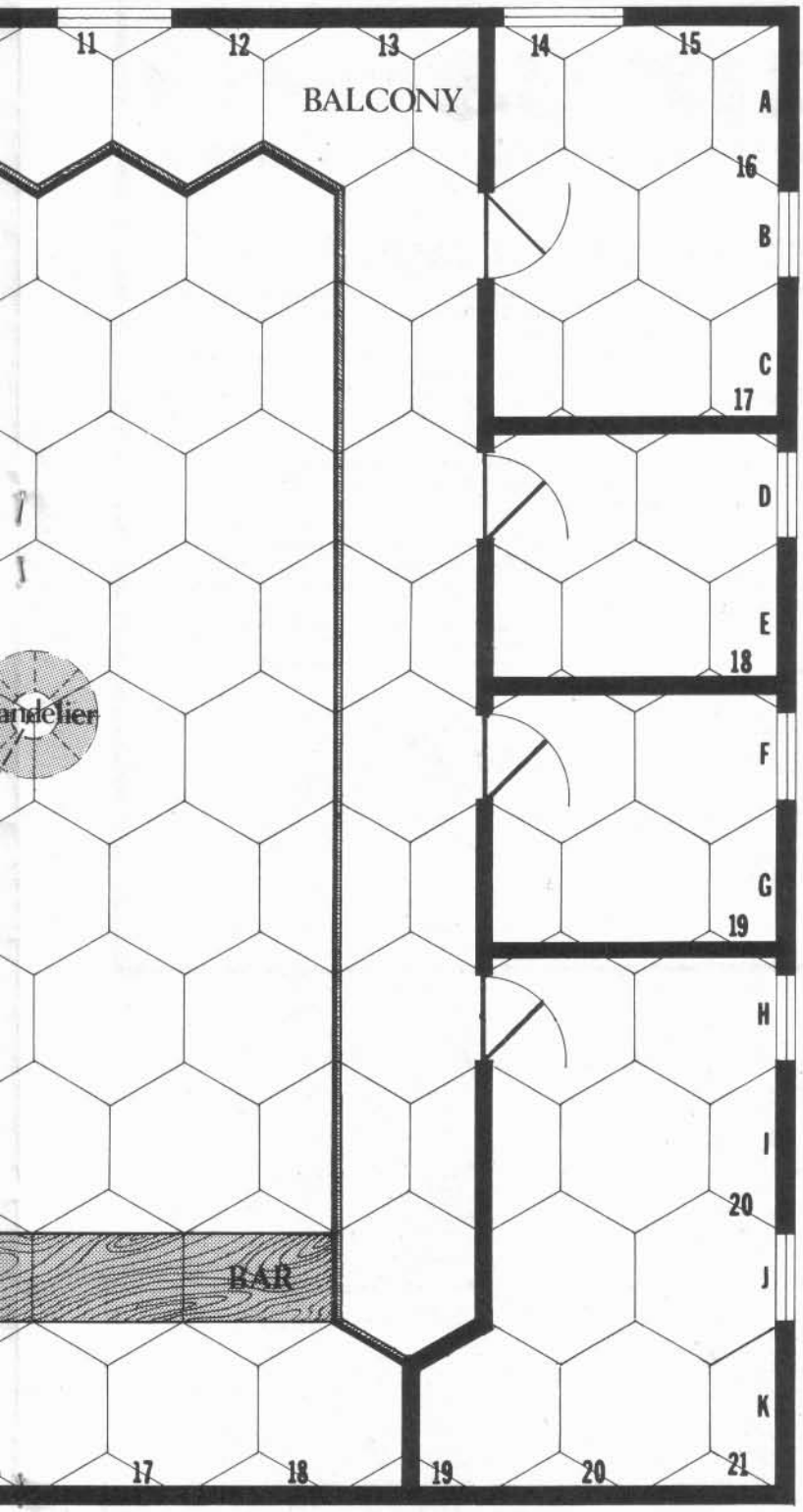
KITCHEN

log fire

TABLES

CHAIRS

BEDS



BAR~ROOM BRAWL

9. **Wererat:** evil, 9 hits, AC6, 4 hexes. 50 g.p., concealed dagger. When in rat form you can call 1–4 giant rats. You hate clerics of all sorts and alignments because of what happened to your brothers. Kill them. You are in human form, looking like a typical peasant. It takes one round to change form. Remember wererats attack by weapon type, not with teeth or claws.

10. **Elf Magic-User:** 3rd level, neutral, 6 hits, AC4, 2 hexes. +1 chainmail, dagger, silver tipped throwing knife, 300 g.p. You want magic items. Spells: detect magic, charm person, ventriloquism, levitate.

11. **Female Assassin:** 2nd level, neutral, 10 hits, AC9, 4 hexes. 100 g.p. +1 dagger (concealed), vial containing poison. No money (it's buried outside). You appear to be a typical saloon woman available for a price. You have been hired to assassinate some good types, among them a paladin and a cleric. You think they're here but don't know them by sight.

12. **Ranger:** 1st level, good, 12 hits, AC4, 3 hexes. Sword +1, +2 vs. lycanthropes, chainmail, shield, dagger, composite bow and 20 silver tipped arrows. You are broke. You are on the trail of a wererat. You think he's here but don't know his human appearance. You look pretty disreputable after your long wilderness trek.

13. **Female Magic-User:** 2nd level, evil, 5 hits, AC6, 4 hexes. Bracers of defence AC6, dagger. A trained war dog is your bodyguard and only companion. You have 10 g.p. Spells: protection/good, magic missile. You are the illegitimate daughter of the bar-keeper, who raped your mother. You want to burn down the inn, but you don't want your father to die – he must live to suffer. You hate all men and will punish any who touch you. (The dog growls at anyone who gets near you unless you tell it to be quiet.)

14. **Hobbit Thief:** 3rd level, neutral, 7 hits, AC6, 4 hexes. 100 g.p., leather armour +1, sword, sling. You need money to pay off an evil landowner who is gouging your village.

15. **Cleric:** 3rd level, good, 9 hits, AC4, 2 hexes. War hammer, shield, chainmail, sling, staff of healing. Large moneybags holding 600 electrum clink at your side. This is an offering from your church to the "Pope" and must be protected. Do good deeds. Spells: detect evil, remove fear.

16. **Dwarf Fighter:** 2nd level, neutral, 8 hits, AC4, 2 hexes. +3 war hammer! (range 5 squares), dagger, chainmail, shield. Small mithril statuette, worth 500 g.p., concealed. You desire, naturally, to kill all "giant class" – kobolds, orcs, hobgoblins, goblins, gnolls, bugbears, ogres, etc. The hammer does 1–6 damage and returns to the thrower, if a dwarf.

17. **Paladin:** 3rd level, good, 12 hits, AC3, 3 hexes. Sword, +1 chainmail, shield, silver-tipped dagger. You have given away all but 10 g.p. You wish to destroy all evil, of course, and protect those who are good and/or innocent.

18. **Female Fighter:** 3rd level, evil, 12 hits, AC6, 3 hexes. Leather armour, shield, dagger, +1 sword levitates, composite bow and 20 arrows (including 5 silver tipped). You're broke after the long trip from the west. You are a barbarian from there and hate all non-humans. You are appalled to find so many in the inn. Go get 'em.

19. **Gnoll:** Evil, 12 hits, AC5, 3 hexes. No money. Hired temporarily as "bouncer". Kill anyone who initiates an attack. You use a two-handed sword.

20. **Bar-keeper:** Neutral, 8 hits, AC9, 4 squares. You are a retired 3rd level magic-user. You have a very old fear wand with one charge left, which is behind the bar along with a dagger, loaded light crossbow, and a rock. Spells: detect magic, shield, hold portal. You want to protect your wife and daughter, and your 1,500 g.p. (buried in the kitchen). The "till" contains 50 g.p.

21. **Monk:** 2nd level, evil, 8 hits, AC8, 4 hexes. 50 g.p., composite bow with three +2 arrows, plus normal arrows, sword, dagger. Kill good creatures, especially clerics, paladins, and rangers: be nasty.

22. **Anticleric:** 3rd level, evil, 11 hits, AC4, 2 hexes. 200 g.p., chainmail, shield, war hammer, sling, snake staff. Spells' cause light wounds, cause fear. You want a woman, either voluntarily or by rape. (Time required for the act is at least two rounds, not including the time necessary to remove your armour.)

23. **Druid:** 2nd level, neutral, 9 hits, AC6, 3 hexes. Scimitar, wooden shield, leather armour, dagger with silver tip. Ring of animal control, 100 g.p. Spells: faerie fire, predict weather, heat metal. Punish those who destroy animals or plants. Never kill either if you can avoid it. The ring controls only natural beasts, not giant animals or monsters.

WATER	WATER	PLANT	PLANT	TORCH	SAND	SAND	STEW	MONKEY	DOG	3 FEMALE	6 MALE	9 MALE	12 MALE	15 MALE	18 FEMALE	21 MALE
WATER	WATER	PLANT	TORCH	TORCH	SAND	SAND	RAT 1	RAT 2	1 FEMALE	4 FEMALE	7 MALE	10 ELF MALE	13 FEMALE	16 DWARF MALE	19 GNOLL	22 MALE
WATER	PLANT	PLANT	TORCH	TORCH	SAND	STEW	RAT 3	RAT 4	2 MALE	5 MALE	8 OGRE	11 FEMALE	14 HOBBIT	17 MALE	20 MALE	23 MALE

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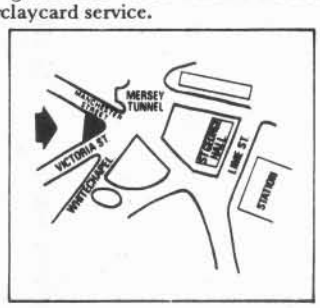

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Astromen or "Rocketheads" are Terran explorers who live in settlements on the borders of known space with picturesque names like Rogerstown and Gordonsville. They are very patriotic and unusually heroic, with simple ideas of right and wrong. Impulsive, curious, and persistant, they scorn the bureaucracy of regular space fleet crews and fly their own small scout ships on missions of individualistic nature. Many have adopted idiomatic and eccentric behaviour modes from old Earth ethnic groups.

Tauran Priests are rational pacifists with extra contact and empathetic skills. The coming of the Vedeni called forth the old traditions in the Tauran culture that helped move them from ferocious emotional beings to the modern logicians we see in the current era. The great ones are highly respected, and reveranced by their own race.

The Amazonian Union is a secret political society of humanoid women (including Zangids but excluding Vedeni) who are pledged to end present strife which they see as emanating from cultures overly influenced by patriarchal backgrounds. Once they reveal themselves to robots and androids they have a special charisma rating vis a vis these other dominated creatures. High minded members may disobey orders that go against their beliefs.

Tislak Adopters are a race of green skinned, blue haired nihilistic materialists who will "appropriate" anything from anyone. Well mannered but hopeless kleptomaniacs, they would join any cause but no one will have them. Their culture is an odd conglomeration of historical communities of other races which have been copied from historical records.

The Guardians are psionic masters who claim to guard a "door" to another galaxy. Their secret agents have infiltrated most races and try to stop any attempts at extra galactic travel. Latest reports indicate that the menace they claim to keep in check from the other galaxy is linked to the Vedeni crusade. Their secret planet Sha-o-la is a base; they do not use advanced military mechanical devises but have stellar flight.

Vicossacks are tribal nomads who first settled many planets and then turned their backs on spaceships, preferring lush planets of barbaric splendor. They now spread when they wish via transport arrangements with Grilli merchants. Found in great variety in many solar systems, Vicossacks are macho, individualistic, and greedy. Often local types are used as holding forces or colonizers in local partnerships with starfaring races. They sometimes coexist with native races, who they make quite nervous by constant raiding activities.

Grillii are morally neutral space merchants from the Orion systems who resemble Terran brown bears but are only violent in self defence or extremely lucrative ambush-type incidents. They are interested mainly in profitable ventures and their loyalty can often be bought temporarily by promises of future rewards. They fly unarmed space freighters which are protected by interracial treaties, as their activities are considered very important to both the Confederacy and the Zangid-Vedeni alliances.

Arcturan Firedrakes are amphibian lizardmen (one of ten has flame breath weapon) who are physically powerful but lack stellar flight. Their three planets change alliances frequently and not always together. They are happy to travel with others, but always try to steal stellar technology.

Zanoid Ultras are Zangids that have undergone genetic surgery and are equipped with a minor power (heat ray vision, extra strength, radiation-proof skin) but are disliked even by others of their race. The Confederacy considers such tampering immoral, even on androids or cyborgs.

Hellasian Demondroids are super robots linked to a giant computer matrix created by an unknown madman. They have stellar travel and attempt to capture all humanoids and use the organic brain cells to enlarge the capacities of their communal being. With impervious metal skin (treat as battle armor) and heavily armed, they fly destroyers in hit and run raids, unable as of yet to make war on a major power. *All* humanoids will ally against them at any time.

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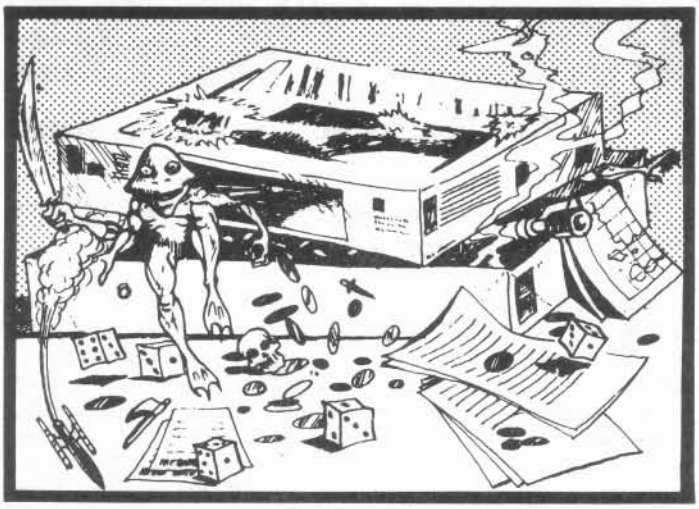

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Dimension Six Inc. – £6.95

This two-player game consists of a box, two playing boards which are of good quality card, a pad of ships' logs, two sheets of 120 counters, one D6 and a rules booklet.

The boards have all the necessary combat matrices printed on them which speeds play up no end. One of the boards represents ordinary space showing the two home planets and a few unclaimed ones, the second board represents a planetless Dimension Six – a parallel plane in which only hand-to-hand combat can take place and ships move by means of a Dimension Six travel tube built at the beginning of each turn.

Players can prospect on planets in normal space for Delium in order to manufacture powerful missiles on their home planets. They can also use ships to build spacestations and outposts to defend conquered planets. Planets are conquered by landing friendly ships on them while they are undefended or by destroying occupying enemy ships. Simple isn't it? In fact too simple. To build outposts/spacestations a player has to keep a few ships stationary without participating in combat for a few turns and they appear at that spot. To construct missiles two units of Delium must be transported from the mining planet to the home base and next turn a missile is created. There are no energy/currency limitations on what you build so usually the game starts off with a race by the scout ships to find Delium on the unoccupied planets while the big ships get ready to build outposts/spacestations to guard these acquisitions.

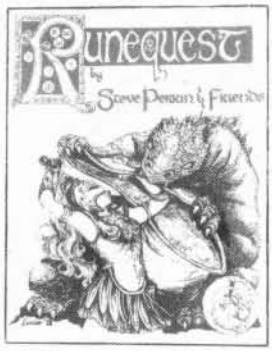
The combat begins when opposing scout ships meet while trying to prospect the same planet. Then it is up to the players as to whether they have one enormous battle there and then or try some tactical play involving Dimension Six.

The game as it stands would be ideal for young SF enthusiasts who would like to try boardgaming.

Overall: 5 **Jacek Gabrielczyk**

RUNEQUEST

The Chaosium – £4.95



Another role-playing game, this time set in the bronze age world of Glorontha, scene of *White Bear & Red Moon* and of *Nomad Gods*. The *Runequest* booklet contains 116 pages of well thought-out and comprehensive rules, together with a pullout section containing copies of all the tables that will be required in play.

Runequest starts with a short introduction to role-playing games and to the world of Glorontha, and continues with chapters on:

- Character generation
- Movement and melee
- Combat skills (and training)
- Basic magic
- Other skills (and training)
- Rune magic and the rune cults
- Monsters
- Monster Hoards

It is rounded off by a chapter of Referee notes containing hints on how to set up scenarios, together with various optional rules and assorted tables and items of information.

Character generation is quite complex, seven characteristics being rolled and ten bonuses being calculated from them. These bonuses, in turn, modify the character's basic untrained chance of doing various things. Thus a Perception bonus of 5% increases the character's chance of 5% of doing such things as finding hidden items, spotting traps and sensing ambushes. A character's chance of doing something is called a skill and characters advance in *Runequest* by successfully practicing individual skills.

Combat is in twelve second melee rounds, the order in which blows are struck being determined by how far the combatants have moved, together with their size, dexterity and length of weapon. The chance of actually hitting with a weapon is the combatant's skill with that weapon less any skill the target has in defence, and a wide variety of weapons are available which have different basic chances of hitting, different lengths, and which do differing amounts of damage when they hit. It is possible to parry blows either with shield or weapon and a successful parry will mean that the blow has no effect. Blows which hit do damage in particular locations, the damage being reduced by any armour which is worn on that location. Arms and legs which take more damage than they have hit points become useless, and excessive damage to the head or torso results in the combatant dying within two turns if he is not cured.

There are two forms of Basic Magic in *Runequest* – spell casting and spirit combat. Spells are taught by the rune cults and characters must be trained in the spell they want to cast before they can cast it. Spirit combat can be performed without any training, but to gain any advantage from spirit combat the character needs a spell SPIRIT BINDING to bind the spirit to serve him. Magical attack, whether by casting spells or by spirit combat requires the use of Power (a rolled characteristic) and the chances of a successful magical attack are determined by comparing the attacker's Power with the target's Power: if they are the same there is a 50% chance of success, if the attacker's Power is greater by one there is a 55% chance of success, and so on. As with other skills, successful magical attack leads to increased chance of success in future attacks – in this case it leads to increased Power.

Rune magic is a god-aided form of magic which may only be practiced by priests of the rune cults. A character may join a cult as a rune priest when he has a power of 18 or better, can read and write his native tongue, and is able to convince the examiners of his dedication to the cult and its goals. On becoming a priest he will gain training in the use of rune magic and he will also gain a spirit ally to serve him. A character who has a power of 15 or better, has attained 90% ability in at least five skills, and can convince the examiners of his dedication to

the cult and its goals may, instead, join the cult as a rune lord. Rune lords may not use rune magic but they do gain a spirit ally and may call on their god to get them out of nasty situations. They also gain access to improved armour and weapons, and they may improve their abilities in fighting skills past 100%.

The monsters in the *Runequest* booklet consist of some three dozen intelligent monsters, twenty unintelligent or undead monsters and a dozen assorted riding animals. Just like the characters, the monsters have rolled characteristics, bonuses and skills. Like characters they can increase their ability at a skill by practising it successfully, and the intelligent ones can use armour and weapons, cast spells and join rune cults. Averages for the monster's characteristics are provided together with the skills, spells, armour and weapons normally chosen to speed up the referee's task of monster creation. The *Runequest* monster system is simple enough to allow monsters from other sources to be easily converted by those who feel that there isn't enough variety in the monsters provided, and it has the virtues of allowing monsters of a given type to vary widely and of allowing any intelligent monster to be played as a character.

A system of grading monsters according to their toughness is provided, and a set of tables is given based on this which allows monster treasure to be randomly generated. Needless to say, the amount of treasure a monster can have can vary wildly using these tables, and a weak monster can have a fortune while a tough one is impoverished. This is one area of the rules which could use some revision — potential referees should use these tables with caution.

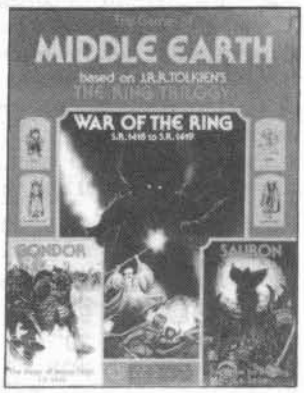
I have run some short scenarios using these rules: one with pre-rolled "experienced" characters (a great troll, an ogre, a scorpion man and a tuskbrother) attacking a dragonewt slave train, the others being with genuine player-rolled characters. Currently the local *Runequest* group contains two ogres, two humans, an elf, a minotaur, a tuskbrother and a barbarian duck, who have decided that dishonesty is the best policy, and that they should join or form a band of brigands.

These are a set of rules which I can recommend as a good alternative to *Dungeons & Dragons.* Using the *Runequest* rules, a campaign can be set up simply and quickly with little effort to the referee. There is no need to set up a vast underground complex before play can start nor is there any need to set up a complex social structure (as in *Chivalry & Sorcery*). What must be provided before play starts is a set of encounters which will give the characters a chance to practice their skills, and story-lines to justify the encounters and give them some atmosphere.

Overall: 9 **Jim Donohoe**

MIDDLE EARTH

SPI — £12.00



This is the SPI attempt to get Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* into game form. As such it is one of the most artistic games they have ever published, and one of the easiest to learn how to play even if you are not experienced with SPI games. However, it is also one of the least balanced games they have ever put out.

First, a physical description of the whole thing. The *Middle Earth* box includes *War of the Ring*, which is £8.50 when purchased separately, and which simulates the Trilogy; *Gondor*, which is £5.00 separately and simulates the battle of Minas Tirith; and *Sauron*, also £5.00 when bought separately, which simulates the Elves & men vs. Mordor at the end of the Second Age, when Isildur, Elendil, Anarion, and Gil-galad defeated Sauron.

War of the Ring is the star feature of the game set. It includes a map of Middle-Earth so nicely adapted to SPI's hexagon system that it could well be used for other Middle-Earth-type campaigns with little trouble. There is a set of counters representing every character mentioned in the Triliogy (and a few that aren't) with the exceptions of Ghan-buri-ghan, Treebeard, and a few others. In a large departure from what SPI normally does, each character also has a card included giving his/her characteristics, along with a Tim Kirk drawing of that character. The characteristics include Combat ability, Morale, Endurance (i.e. Hit Points in D&D terms), Ring Rating (how well the character can wear the ring until he/she turns into a Ringwraith), and, if the character is capable of it, a Sorcery rating.

Other cards included: a set of Magic cards, representing the various foes the Fellowship had to fight that Sauron did not have direct control over (Shelob, the Balrog, the Barrow-wight, etc.); a set of event cards, which players use to create and make use of the various spontaneous events that occured in the Trilogy (and several that did not); and Search cards, which specify which provinces Sauron can search for the Fellowship players (who try to remain unidentified, i.e. their counters are face-down.)

The game plays smoothly enough, and since most of the more difficult things to remember are either printed on the mapboard or on an information sheet given to each player, there is usually little trouble in following the rules.

But the basic problem with the game is two-fold:

1) To play the game optimally, one must follow strategies that little resemble those in the Trilogy, e.g. try to kill Gandalf the Grey as soon as possible (so he can come back Gandalf the White), use Shadowfax to ride into Mordor, get Saruman out of Isengard as soon as possible to attack the Ringbearer, and so forth.

2) The game, if played by two players of more-or-less equal skill, is heavily weighted on the side of the Fellowship player. Unless the Dark Power player is very conversant with the rules and/or has played many more games than the Fellowship player, the Fellowship player will almost always win.

Of course, it is not fordoomed from the beginning that the Fellowship player will win, but there are far more combinations of Magic cards and Event cards that when discovered/selected at the right time lead to a Fellowship win than there are leading to a Dark Power player win.

Perhaps the reason this did not come to SPI's notice is that there are two games in one for *War of the Ring.* (Well, three, actually, if you count the three-player version where Saruman is played by a separate player.) The first version is the character version — it just deals with the Fellowship, the Nazgul, Saruman, the Mouth of Sauron, and occasional sundry Orcs. This is the simplest version to play, and the one that I have based my above observations on.

The second version is the campaign version. It includes ALL the characters in the Trilogy, plus the armies they command (if any), plus even more event cards. I've only played this version twice, and, while both times the Fellowship player won, I cannot honestly say that it is as unbalanced as the character version is without further testing.

The other two games in the *Middle Earth* set are less exotic than *War of the Ring*, but more traditional in their playing style. *Gondor*, depicting the last day or so of the siege of Minas Tirith, is a moderately good siege game. It suffers a bit from too much realism — there are a touch too many things to keep track of (at least to me, but perhaps not to a hard-core wargaming and Tolkien fan) such as boiling oil, fire bombs, severed heads, reinforcements, the spells of the Nazgul and Gandalf, and so forth. But it seemed to play nicely — the rules were clear enough when we came to any glitches in play.

Sauron is a bit less complicated and a bit more fun, since really very little is said about the battle in the Trilogy or in the *Silmarillion.* There are a few magic weapons, and Sauron had his magic spells, but it is no more difficult to play than a mass-combat D&D scenario is.

Sauron and *Gondor* have a set of Standard Rules, that is, rules that apply to them both, and each game has a set of Exclusive rules, that is, rules that apply to that game only. It makes learning how to play both games extremely easy.

All in all, I'd say the game set *Middle Earth* is only fair. Tolkien deserves much better.

Overall: 5 **Bill Seligman ►**

OPEN BOX

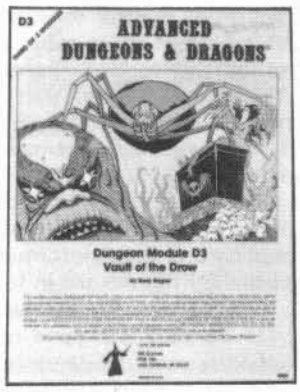
Continued from page 19

DUNGEON MODULES

TSR Hobbies Inc

D1 (Descent into the Depths of the Earth) – £2.25
D2 (Shrine of the Kuo-Toa) – £2.25
D3 (Vault of the Drow) – £2.75

(Prices are those of the U.K. printing now available)



If the G Modules are imaginatively planned, the product of much creative thought and excellent value for money, the D Modules are doubly so. In format and style they are very similar to the G Modules but are at once more expansive in their scope, less convergent in their setting and – oh heavens! – even tougher.

For the first time the designer indicates the scope of his thinking – each module contains a large-scale referee's map, 1 mile to a hex, which indicates a huge complex of hundreds of miles of underground tunnels and Encounter Areas. (The G Modules are set just off the south-east edge of this map). There are ten Encounter Areas in the main area of the map, and these are the areas covered in these three Modules (so value for money is even better than before – in addition to a full description of a major Encounter Area in each module, there are also at least two minor Encounter Areas). Also marked on the referee's map (but not on the players' version, which contains much less information even about the areas encompassed in the Modules) are over forty other major and minor Encounter Areas; these are either areas which are left to the DM to design or are to be the subject of future Modules to be published by TSR. If they are eventually planning to cover all forty-odd, Gary Gygax has some task awaiting him, and the public (for I have no doubt that these Modules will be very popular) can look forward to many more Modules to come.

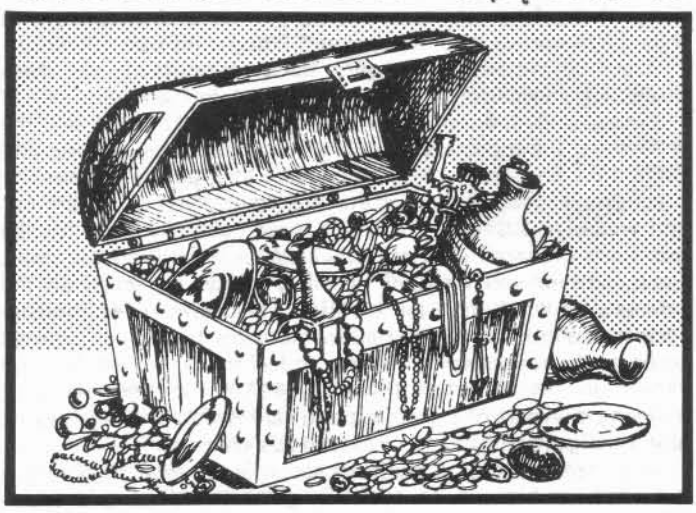
The designer's intention is again that the Modules should be treated as parts of an evolving campaign, and though it is possible to handle them individually this might put the adventuring party at a disadvantage for there are artifacts to be found in D1 and D2 which could be useful in D3. In effect, we have here the fourth, fifth and sixth parts of an infinitely-long progressive campaign scenario to which the Giants were mere curtain-raisers. The seventh part, announced as Queen of the Demonweb Pits which is to follow soon, takes the scenario one terrifying step further.

To return to a previous theme, it's a pity these (early?) modules are suitable only for parties of high-level characters (D3 is designed for 8 or 9 characters of average 10th level). This means that few DMs will be able to run them with characters which have genuinely attained those dizzy heights (though DMs who run 'give-away' dungeons will no doubt let parties run amok through them and look for even stronger scenarios) unless a DM confers 'brevet ranks'. Yet they are such good examples of immaculate, imaginative design that it would be a shame if they weren't used (for sheer design skills, they put almost everything else I have seen well into the shade). Are the other forty-plus to be even tougher? I hope not, though they will of course have to be reasonably compatible with D1–D3 because geographically they are close by. I will leave this problem in the capable hands of the designer . . . .

I look forward with great enthusiasm to receiving more Modules from TSR – if these constitute an example of their quality, no discerning D&D enthusiast should be without them. You won't regret adding them to your collection, and don't be surprised if they eclipse in quality most of the material you already have.

Overall: 10 **Don Turnbull**

TREASURE CHEST



TREASURE CHEST is open for contributions relating to D&D additional rules, character classes, magic systems, objects, tricks and traps etc.

'Little Old Men'

Little Old Men have always been regular occupants of most dungeons and so we thought readers would like to read of some variations on the theme. (These were originally submitted to The Fiend Factory.*)*

PEACEMAKER

by Billy Orr

Armour class:	**9**
Movement:	**9"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8**
Alignment:	**lawful/good**
Intelligence:	**highly**

Peacemakers are humans whose only object in life is to put an end to fighting. They have automatic 'Protection' spells which make them immune to magical and weapon attacks (though Dispel Magic would remove the protection). When they meet a group of player-characters, or even monsters, Peacemakers will make one attempt to persuade them to give up adventuring and get a nice peaceful job instead. This should be treated as a Charm spell; any character failing to make his saving roll will throw down his weapons and try to return to the surface. Characters are allowed further saving rolls at intervals depending on their intelligence.

Peacemakers never fight and will try to escape if they fail to charm their victim(s) and their protection has been negated.

WEIRDO

by Ian McDowall

Armour class:	**9**
Movement:	**20"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8**
Alignment:	**chaotic, but neither good nor evil**
Intelligence:	**highly**

These blokes can talk any language and are somewhat demented. They are dressed in rags and are normally capering insanely or sitting absentmindedly in thought. They are quite willing to talk with anyone they meet and form a good source of information, though that information will usually be cryptic. If they are attacked they will flee screaming for help and alerting everyone within earshot of the character's presence. They are completely harmless humans, though you would never believe it to meet one.

THE FRIEND

by Trevor Mendham

Armour class:	**9**
Movement:	**10"**
Hit Dice:	**2D8**
Alignment:	**lawful/good**
Intelligence:	**low**

The Friend resembles a playful young girl, only she has exceptional mental powers. She is to be found roaming the dungeon corridors. When she meets a party, she will take control of their minds (no save allowed) and make them put their nasty weapons in a pile on the floor, in case they accidentally hurt someone. The Friend will then make them all feel very happy and they will dance about the corridor, laughing merrily.

When a wandering monster – attracted by the noise – arrives (which one certainly will within 6 turns), the Friend again exerts her influence and they will all play merrily together. After a short time, the Friend skips off down the corridor, leaving the new 'friends' to play with each other. And its mental control goes with it. The joke – if joke it is for the unfortunate adventurers – is that as the Friend decides to leave the party, they will find themselves weaponless dancing around with a bear or an umber hulk which suddenly decides it isn't friendly after all.

Ring of Arms

by Stephen Baker

This magical ring is made of platinum and shaped like a lizard's tail entwined in a circle. The apparent value is 100 g.p. When this very useful ring is placed on a character he feels nothing for about an hour and then he finds that his clothes are getting tight at about four inches below the armpits and generally around his chest area. When he removes his armour or clothes, etc. he finds two lumps, one on each side of his body, that are hard and boney. At this time they start to irritate slightly. If he takes the ring off the lumps will disappear with a lot of discomfort and pain. If the DM wishes to lower the player's dexterity while he is hampered by the pain, that is up to him. If, however, the player elects to keep the ring on, about an hour later he will acquire two extra arms which of course is very useful, especially to a warrior or thief.

After a little practise he will be able to fight with two weapons and two shields thus making a double attack and defence in a round. He could also climb twice as fast. The limits of the character are connected with his dexterity, as follows:

Dexterity	Ability
5 or below	Only simple tasks (climbing, etc.)
6 – 10	Can use three shields and one weapon
11 – 12	Can use two weapons
13 – 14	Can use three weapons
15+	Can use four weapons

When the ring is removed the arms disappear in about two hours.

Do you enjoy having sand kicked in your face? Then this is the character class for you!

The Weakling

by H. Watson and P. Marjoram

All humanoids are eligible for this class. Weaklings cannot carry *anything*, not even treasure (except 10 g.p.'s weight of gems, jewellery, etc.), because they are far too weak. They cannot wear armour. They are too frightened to enter into combat and will not carry weapons of any kind even if charmed, this includes missile weapons of any sort. Weaklings will not go near anything which is too noisy, too big, or anything that is alight or magical. On top of all this they have a habit of running away in sticky situations, or when facing hostile creatures, including members of their own party who shout at them. Weaklings do, however, have the use of a few spells. Should any character wish to be a weakling, his strength, constitution, dexterity and charisma must all be 7 or below.

Spells

Pity: The victims of this spell will take pity on the caster and will not attack him or his party unless physically threatened. The victim may (70%) also donate approx. one tenth of its treasure to the party. Duration 5 moves, range 80 ft.

Speed: This spell enables the caster to run at double speed when running away from pursuers. Duration 3 moves.

Cower in Shadows: This spell enables the caster to merge into the shadows, thus making him virtually invisible. Duration 4 moves.

Light: As all weaklings are afraid of the dark this spell is a necessity. Duration 3 turns plus the level of the weakling.

Experience

Weaklings gain experience for *not* running away from foes, and for casting spells.

Experience gained for casting spells:

Pity	– 10 points per HD of foe (only if successful)
Speed	– 30 points
Cower in Shadows	– 20 points
Light	– 10 points

Whenever a weakling faces a foe the table below must be consulted to determine whether or not he runs away.

HD of Foe	% Chance of Running Away	Experience Gained Through Staying
½	4	5
1–1	8	7½
1	12	10
1+1	16	15
2	20	20
2+1	24	25
3	28	35
3+1	32	50
4	36	75
4+1	40	125
5	44	175
5+1	48	225
6	52	275
6+1	56	350
7	60	450
7+1	64	525
8	68	650
8+1	72	750
9–10	76	900
11–12	80	1100
13	84	1350
14–16	88	1650
17–20	92	2000
21+	96	2500

NOTE: the foes' HD must be totalled together, e.g. if a weakling meets 5 times 1HD monsters or humanoids, treat as one times 5HD monster.

	Level	Experience Points	Spells usable in 1 day (1 week for Wilderness adventures)
1	Amateur Weakling	0	0
2	6 Stone Weakling	2,000	Light
3	5 Stone Weakling	4,000	Light
4	4 Stone Weakling	8,000	Cower in Shadows
5	3 Stone Weakling	16,000	Cower in Shadows
6	2 Stone Weakling	32,000	Speed
7	Coward	64,000	Speed
8	Sissy	120,000	Pity
9	Milksop	240,000	Pity
10	Chicken	350,000	Light
11	Runaway	500,000	Cower in Shadows
12	Weed	750,000	Speed
13	Super Weed	1,000,000	Pity

NOTE: These spells are cumulative, e.g. a 3 Stone Weakling would be able to use 2 *light* spells and 2 *cower in shadows* spells. Hit Points = 1 per level.

Valley of the Four Winds

by Rowland Flynn ©1978

Chapter Four: TOWARDS THE STONE FINGERS

Hero and his men, seeking to save their city Farrondil from the wizard Hajjin's curse with swords and the strange, talismanic "Swan Bones", have bested the witches of Greengorm Forest; they now continue north on the dubious advice of coven queen Mother Sulphur . . .

Here in the north the forest changed. The trees were higher, darker, though still close-packed; the trail was narrow. Where before the forest's dread had lain in shapes half-seen amid mossy trunks, here the trees themselves pressed close like jostling giants which at any moment might pash out the life of the small fry who crept among them. Hero, tallest of the band, felt less tall; the silent pressure of the great trees diminished them all. No sensation of hostility, nor even of being watched; nothing but a vast indifference. As the oppression grew, they gradually slowed the horses; they spoke in low murmurs; they pressed close together for companionship. Anvar, with a defiant look about him, gulped wine from his flask.

In the dry stillness, they heard the howling and baying from afar — and then the thrice-repeated note of a horn. It was the common sound of a hunt far behind, but in that brooding silence it was shocking, as though the pack were raving and yelping through some deeply holy temple. Hooves clopped on the hard, dry ground of the trail, the whole wild cacophony drawing nearer along the same path they trod.

"They come for us," said Hero.

"Open battle we've had," said Pursio. "Sly deceptions in the night we've suffered also. And now we're to be *hunted?*"

"A mortal insult," Madoc added dryly. "Would it be craven to suggest we leave the trail?"

"Craven is as craven does," said Pursio and urged his horse into the trees. At Hero's nod the others would have followed, but already the baying was close, was on either side and all around. A great black hound ran across the trail ahead, as though in warning; no other dog could be seen, but the trees were alive with panting, yelping and deep, full-throated howls. From behind came louder hoofbeats, until with another flourish on his horn the hunter rode into view. For all that he wore a common green cloak and sat his horse like any other, this was no ordinary man. There was that in his eyes which even Hero could not look upon; something which heralded a being of Power.

"Who stands in my path?" came his booming voice.

"None that wish you ill," replied Hero, striving to meet those piercing eyes. "Pass by in good peace." What was this fear which shook him as a dog shakes its prey?

"A civil answer, by the gods," said the Hunter softly: and all the dogs fell silent. "It's seldom that men do more than cower at my passing. Sir, for your courage I give you fair coin: you are misled. This way leads only to a pixy-village, where the monster that besets them will surely make an end of you all. Turn back, and take the middle way."

"M-my thanks," said Hero. "You go to aid the pixy-folk, then, lord?"

"Aid? Aid?" The hounds bayed in unison. "I give no aid, mortal. I hunt, following my whim in all things."

"Well then, I thank you for your whim." Hero wanted nothing more than to escape those terrible eyes. And now the Hunter gave a raucous laugh which rang among the trees: "Oh aye, aye, my whim aids you. But where I give I take away." Again the freezing laughter. "Shall you aid the pixies yourselves, for blood and a mirror? Or will you seek safety on the true path? 'Tis a good joke." He spurred his horse then, and thundered between Hero and Madoc, who could only cringe aside. The hound-cries died slowly; only when they had faded did anyone move.

"To the true path, then?" said Anvar.

"Most surely," said Madoc, who through the meeting had sat like a carven statue; and Rhys nodded also.

"O most damnable Hunter!" cried Pursio. "'Tis no simple matter, friends. Our good Hero will surely wish to aid these pixies: and, pox take it, that is what we must do — for blood and a mirror!"

Hero's fist clenched. "The Swan Bones. You mean the pixies may have their secret, the secret which escapes you?"

"Aye; so said the Hunter." Pursio scowled.

"The way ahead is dark," said Anvar.

"As is the way behind," said Hero. "The Hunter leaves a hard choice; but I say we succour these pixies. Who knows? What affrights them may be easy prey for our doughty selves!" *But the Hunter thought not so,* he recalled silently.

Presently they rode on in silence, towards whatever might await them. More and more it seemed that in this dark quest, every choice was no choice; that no hazard might be avoided, whatever their skill and cunning. Their weird had them in its cold grip.

* * *

For a while the trail had a deadly sameness, as though the weary horses might plod forever without any change in the vista of tall trunks. When the silence was broken, it was doubly startling. There came a snick and whiz, and Hero's horse shied; in the trail before them stuck a yellow-feathered arrow like some bright unnatural flower. "Beware, beware!" shrieked a high, thin voice. "Trespassers beware!"

"By whose leave do you speak?" called Hero, signing to Pursio — who leant back and whispered to Caspar. "Aye, I'll mark him if he speaks again," said the bowman in return: his red-blue arrow was already nocked, and Gorwin too stood ready.

"I speak for the Pixy-King, or the Forest-King — 'tis all one," came the mocking cry in the trees; a second arrow struck by the first. This time Hero saw the little bowman, astride a branch some ten feet up — balanced for only a moment more, for Caspar's arrow took him neatly in the shoulder and sent him flying in a backward somersault. Before he hit the mossy ground, Hero and Pursio were running to the spot; Gorwin, still as ice, held his shaft ready to loose.

The pixy was a comical fellow whose face seemed mostly beard and nose. He wore bright red and yellow, hardly any concealment in this forest; he lay groaning as though in his death agony, though Hero saw that Caspar's skill had lodged the arrow in the pixy's jerkin-arm without scratching him.

"A dozen new suits," groaned the pixy, "No less will I accept. The Pixy-King will hear of this foul play."

Pursio lifted him roughly and wrenched forth the arrow, further tearing the jerkin. "O fie!" the pixy shrieked, and whipped a knife from his belt; but straightaway Hero caught his arm.

"Ill-tempered fellow, for all you're only half man-size," said Hero grimly. "What d'you know of — blood and a mirror?"

The pixy face became bland and knowing. "Little, o little, good sirs. For the price of a few new jerkins, now — and mayhap a cape as well, for surely you're generous travellers — I'll gladly lead you to our King. Never has Ifix (for such is my name) failed to play fair, as anyone will tell you."

Exasperated, Hero introduced himself and Pursio; "Why did you accost us?" he asked.

Ifix's face was blander still. "Perhaps from afar you seem villainous, sirs. 'Tis all in the game."

The infuriating pixy was outfitted in Pursio's spare jerkin and a cape belonging to the wounded Damzik. Then, squatting on Pursio's saddlebow with the air of one who reveals great mysteries, he led them along the exact trail they had been following. Presently the scent of woodsmoke drifted through the forest; and soon a small stone dwelling could be seen to one side of the trail. Towards this Ifix scampered as though suddenly terrified; they plunged after him. "O help, help!" he cried. "Thieves, murderers, brigands, cannibals! Put forth your power, Old Man, and smite them where they stand!" The pursuers halted in a grassy space before the cottage, as a greybeard of wizardly aspect came forth; and again arrows were nocked.

"Hush, child," said the man to Ifix. And to the others: "If you come for pillage, rapine and loot, linger not in your fell work. The sooner you are done, the sooner can I set about repairs." And Ifix lay on the ground and screamed with laughter.

Hero had never been greeted in quite this fashion. "We ride on quest from Farrondil," he said with dignity. "'Twas revealed to us that we might aid certain pixies beset by evil, and mayhap learn a secret as reward. But are all the pixies like *this?*"

The old man waved vaguely. "You must not mind them; they are but children. As are all men, only some take more pains to conceal the fact." He doffed his broad-brimmed hat, bowed, and made as if to enter the cottage.

"What of the evil?" called Hero.

"There is evil enough in men's hearts without seeking it in fresh variety. But that which afflicts the pixies is like to be found with the pixies — but a few hundred paces further. Aid them if you will. For myself, I cultivate my own garden. Remember that all virtue comes from the earth." And he strode into the cottage.

"The forest breeds madness," Pursio said, shaking his head. "I feel I may begin to gibber at any moment."

"Gibber at *that,*" came Anvar's harsh voice; they turned to see a shape of menace creeping through the trees. It was a swollen beetle, sheep-sized, shiny like polished obsidian; it moved with sudden clicks and scrapes, long antennae aquiver.

Ifix ran towards it. "'Twill be the end of the fool," cried Pursio; and Hero leapt to attack this armoured monster. But again Ifix surprised the party as with a deft leap he seated himself atop the beetle, grasped its antennae in small confident hands and bowed.

"I lead you now to our village," he

squeaked, and his strange steed scuttled off at a fair speed; the horsemen followed wearily.

"The only monster I've yet seen on this trail, and it's no more than a pixy-mount," Hero grumbled, remembering his title of Dragonslayer.

Nobody laughed. Greengorm Forest was a place which slowly sapped men's bravery — and their gaiety.

* * *

But the sight which greeted them amid the pixies' low huts was enough to wring a harsh laugh from Pursio. "All is folly," he said with a grimace. "I see twoscore pixies fighting most earnestly with their ropes and snares and nets — and what do they fight? A tree."

"Go fight the tree, then," said Ifix with a shrill giggle. "Fell the tree and the game is yours. Go, go, do it now!"

The pixies grouped about the tree seemed carefree enough; they laughed as from their catapults they flung stones against the stubby tree — thick-boled but barely twenty feet in height — which stood amongst them. They shot arrows, they threw white balls which burst in sudden clouds — all without effect.

"Yet they do not come close for axework," mused Hero. "Is something hidden from us?"

"I have an axe," said stout Stefison, striding forward and waving the pixies aside. "Draw back one moment, my little masters, and let me take my turn."

"Wait!" Hero called belatedly, but Stefison had already reached the tree and laid back his axe for a mighty blow. The blow never fell; barely had he begun to swing when a branch smashed down with sickening force, crushing Stefison against the trunk in a hideous spray of blood. Slowly and painfully the tree-thing swayed, rising up on its gnarled roots, and moved over Stefison's body: there came an appalling sucking noise as questing roots penetrated the mangled flesh.

Grim silence fell on the company, and talismans were clutched: Morgen caught his lucky shell, Hero the Swan Bones, Anvar his flask. Again the pixies began their bombardment of the creature.

"Your friend loses," said Ifix brightly. "The monster always wins this game; already today it has taken twenty of my folk, but when it is filled the game will be over and we can make merry."

Hero saw the terrible truth of the greybeard's saying: the pixies were like children indeed, but children forced into a game too grim for their understanding.

"This must not be," he said in a low voice. "How can one slay the thing? What of your weapons?"

"Ah," said Ifix, "'tis a clever and cunning monster, and truth to tell our weapons harm it not. The spore sticks should sprout to tangle it, the catapults should break its branches, but it grows anew and shrugs off all we can do. Yet while we keep our distance and attack it always, it does not move; or not as often . . ."

"Fire arrows," suggested Gorwin.

"Fire does but madden it, lord," said Ifix. "When fired it pulled up its roots and crushed half our village before tiring. Fourscore of us lost the game that day; oh, we were most soundly beaten!" The pixy chuckled again, and to Hero that childish chuckle seemed more of a horror than the forest monster itself.

Abruptly the monster surged again from the ground, lurched into the chattering pixy crowd and smote again, sinking its vile roots afresh. On foot or on their strange steeds — huge beetles, woodlice, rats and spiders — the pixies moved back, and the game went on. Hero's shoulders dropped in despair. He could think of nothing — nothing which could end this monstrous game of blood and earth.

"Pursio," he said: "what can we do?"

"Ride back like cravens or be slain like fools," said Pursio bitterly.

Hero said, "If we all attacked we might lop off those fell branches at not too great a cost . . ."

Said Madoc the logician: "We should lose half our company; we can spare none; and the brute grows anew, so that all would be in vain."

"Aye," said Hero. "It takes new strength from each wound, each victim . . ."

All virtue comes from the earth.

The greybeard's last saying blazed suddenly in their minds, and they looked one to another with questioning eyes. It was Rhys who murmured the words aloud. A weight seemed lifted from Hero's shoulders: Pursio smiled as his old friend's brow knotted in thought. "Arrows and ropes?" said the little man; Hero blinked and nodded vigorously.

"Ifix," he said, "have your folk a store of arrows — aye, and rope? We have a new way to play your game, a way that brings victory."

"O excellent fun!" cried the pixy. "Have what you will, if you give us food sport."

The company from Farrondil worked furiously at knotting light ropes to arrow after arrow. When enough were prepared, Caspar and Gorwin, and others versed in archery, stood with bows to hand. Others of the company, led by Hero, circled beyond the tree-thing. Gorwin's first arrow bore no rope; its tip was bound in straw and grass, oil-soaked. Pursio held up a brand, and the arrow blazed; in the same instant it streaked to lodge in the monster's upper branches. Flame sprang up, and more arrows began to fly.

Hero had expected a cry of rage and pain, but more dreadful was the silence with which the maddened tree-thing dragged up its roots, ready to rampage in mindless destruction until it could destroy no more. Before it the air was filled with ropes, and more ropes fell across the high branches; as the thing stood free of its newest self-dug pit, strong hands at either end of each rope began to pull. The twisted roots scratched obscenely at the ground, but could gain no purchase; the sudden pull of the rope-holders toppled it backwards, and for a moment it lay as if stunned. Then the mighty branches creaked and thrust at the tortured earth, beginning to force the thing upright once more; but rope after rope now flew over it, ropes which were rapidly secured by men and pixies, and pegged into the ground at each end. The thing lay trapped. Heaps of dry wood were thrown against the scrabbling, exposed roots — and fired. Unable to draw virtue and nourishment from the earth through its scorched and blackened roots, the tree-beast began to lose its mighty strength; unable to grow anew, it began to die.

Later the men ventured closer to finish the work with axes, splitting wood to stoke the funeral pyre now blazing where the roots had been; much later, Pursio threw the last log on the blaze and wiped the distasteful red sap from his hands.

"A fine game, a well-played game," squeaked Ifix. "But who shall we play with now the thing is gone?"

Hero offered no answer.

The Pixy-King, who seemed less childish than his subjects, spoke privately with Pursio and Hero; and with the aid of a small mirror about three inches square and the blood of two white pigeons, Pursio performed the brief, indescribable ritual which released the Swan Bones' power.

"A coveted power indeed," said the enlightened Pursio without smiling. "Transmutation to gold — think you we can *bribe* our enemies?"

Hero shrugged. "I care not; swords are cleaner than any magic."

* * *

Not wishing to linger lest the pixies contrive new games of slaughtering one another, the party set off — another riderless horse serving to remind them of lost Stefison.

"Our thanks for your hint of the monster's weakness," said Hero to the greybeard as they passed his rude home.

"The secret of all arts is to correct nature," said the fellow with an inscrutable look; and he said no more to them.

It was almost with amazement that they found the forest becoming more sparse as they followed the middle trail indicated by the Hunter. Night fell, and they pitched camp on rocky ground where trees were few; dawn came and before them towered the mighty reaches of the Stonefinger Mountains, into which the path now climbed. As the slope increased, Pursio spied words cut into a flat stone: *Let none pass on to the house of Verokin without good reason.* Verokin: the name spoken by Gondemar's wise king; perhaps the answer to all riddles.

Higher still, and the wind blew cold and gusty over bare rocks. Into a narrow pass they rode, finding themselves amid stone statues of many disturbing shapes, weirdly echoing the phantasms seen in the southern forest. Men, beasts, thing that were neither . . . and then one last figure before the iron gates which closed the far end of the pass. Its burning, living eyes pierced Hero as he met them: the cold, bright eyes of the wizard Hajjin.

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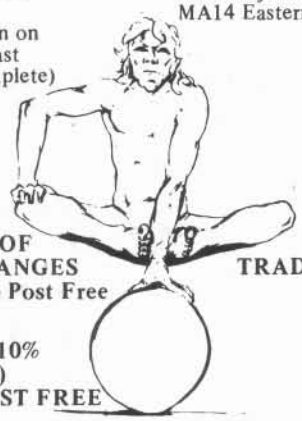

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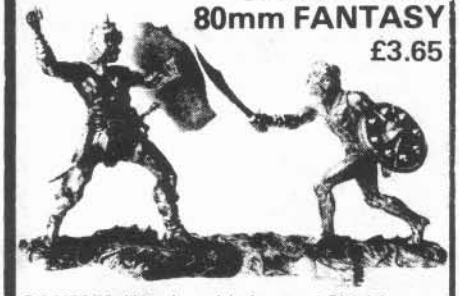

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